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**A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF PENSIONS AND BENEFITS**

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# Reporting A Death

All Funds

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When the death of a member of one of the New Jersey State-administered retirement systems occurs, the member's family or survivors should notify the Division of Pensions and Benefits at (609) 292-7524 and provide the following information:

- the full name of the deceased;
- the deceased's Social Security, pension membership, or retirement number;
- the date of death; and
- the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the person handling the deceased's affairs.

Once a member's death is reported, the Division reviews the member's account to determine what benefits, if any, are due. The Division informs the named beneficiary or beneficiaries by letter of the benefits payable and sends the necessary claim forms.

The processing time for paying a claim depends entirely upon when the Division receives the following items from the beneficiary:

- a certified death certificate; a photocopy is not acceptable;
- all claim forms, properly completed; and
- any uncashed pension checks sent to a deceased retiree (any monies due will be reissued to the beneficiaries or the estate).

## DEATH BENEFITS

Each New Jersey State-administered retirement system has separate laws governing survivor benefits. Survivor benefits are subject to different factors based on the member's employment or retirement status, years of service, life insurance, etc. The initial letter from the Division will specify exactly what amounts are payable to the beneficiary.

### Active Members

Most members of a New Jersey State retirement system are covered by group life insurance. If the deceased was an actively employed member of the retirement system at the time of death, and depending on the pension fund and the circumstances of

the member's death, the beneficiary will receive the life insurance and either a return of the contributions made to the retirement system (Public Employees' Retirement System\* and Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund), or a surviving spouse's pension (Police and Firemen's Retirement System, State Police Retirement System, and Judicial Retirement System). Before any benefit can be calculated, the employer must submit a form called the *Certification of Service and Final Salary — Death Claim*. This form indicates recent salary and employment status.

### Retired Members

If the member was retired, group life insurance is in effect only if the member had group life insurance coverage while in active membership and retired with at least 10 years of pension membership credit or on a disability retirement. Depending upon the retirement system and options selected by the member at retirement, there may be a monthly pension allowance or return of the member's undistributed pension contributions.

For more information on survivor benefits, each retirement system has a member handbook that explains the benefits in detail. The handbooks for all New Jersey State-administered retirement systems can be found at [www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions).

## HEALTH BENEFITS

### Active Members

If the member was employed at the time of death and was covering dependents under the employer's health plan, the eligible dependents can continue to participate in the group coverage for up to 36 months, provided they have no coverage of their own. This continuation of coverage is offered under the provisions of federal COBRA legislation and is obtained through the deceased's employer. Dependents should contact the employer's benefits administrator for more information.

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*\*A spouse of an active member of the Workers' Compensation Judges Part of the Public Employees' Retirement System is entitled to a survivor's pension.*

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If the member was in the PFRS, SPRS, JRS, or the Workers' Compensation Judges Part of the PERS and enrolled in the SHBP as an active employee, surviving dependents who receive a monthly pension allowance will be entitled to continue coverage under the Retired Group of the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP).

If the member was in the PFRS, surviving dependents who receive a monthly accidental death pension allowance will be entitled to coverage under the Retired Group of the SHBP or the employers health plan.

**Retired Members**

If the member was retired at the time of death and was covering eligible dependents under the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP), the eligible dependents receive an information packet with instructions on continuing coverage under the SHBP. If the member had health insurance through another insurer, contact that insurer about continuing coverage.

For more information about benefit coverage under the SHBP, read the *SHBP Summary Program Description (SPD)*. The SPD can be found at: [www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/shbp.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/shbp.htm).

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION  
FOR ALL MEMBERS**

There are things you can do now to help those who will be called upon to take over your affairs after you pass away:

- Keep your retirement system membership records, your membership and/or retirement number, and a record of your date of birth with your other important papers. Make sure those who you are counting on to settle your affairs know where these records are kept.
- Keep your beneficiary designations current. Review your beneficiaries every time you have a change in your family, such as a birth, death, marriage, divorce, etc. *Designation of Beneficiary* forms are available from your employer, by contacting the Division of Pensions and Benefits, or over the Internet at: [www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/epbam/exhibits/pdf/eb214.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/epbam/exhibits/pdf/eb214.pdf)

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